

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Olson Industries Inc.

#### Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership

#### Airport Lighting Cans Jet by Way of Lean Techniques

##### Client Profile:

Olson Industries is a family owned company located in Atkinson, Nebraska, and employs 100 people. Olson Industries manufactures a diverse range of products and services. These include airport lighting cans which hold transformers for air port lighting, electric or utility poles, irrigation systems, custom galvanizing, trash containers, rolloff containers and custom machining. Olson ships products from coast to coast as well as internationally.

##### Situation:

Ted Olson, Jr., had participated in a Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, Lean Manufacturing Network. By participating in various Lean training sessions, Ted realized having his employees trained on the Lean Manufacturing techniques would help the company to become more productive and efficient. Olson was getting pressure from customers to maintain or lower product prices. By training the employees in the Lean Techniques, many production inefficiencies would be identified and eliminated. Ted contacted the NMEP for further assistance to train and assist his employees on the Lean techniques.

##### Solution:

NMEP conducted a Lean Manufacturing 101 training for Olson Industries employees, and then led them through a Value Stream Mapping training and exercise to pinpoint inefficiencies and bottlenecks in production operations. NMEP also began to assist in an implementation on a project to introduce cellular flow manufacturing at the company. During the training, the employees came to realize that much of the work performed in the assembly of the airport cans was non-value added. The employees would haul partially completed light cans in and out of the assembly department, which required other components to be moved back and forth to complete rush orders. Also, the light cans were set on the floor, which caused much lifting all throughout the process. The cans are 12 inches to 23 inches in diameter, 2 to 3 feet tall and weigh from 40 to 80 pounds. A team of employees was organized to figure out a means to eliminate these movements and to streamline the assembly process.

##### Results:

- \* Produced annual savings of \$19,200 by using one-piece flow assembly.
- \* Improved productivity by 25 percent.
- \* Reduced process time, from 6-8 cans down to 3-4 cans in the cell at one time.
- \* Improved visibility of what is completed at each step.
- \* Improved organization.
- \* Improved product and cell flow.
- \* Improved employee job satisfaction and personal growth.

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

**Testimonial:**

"The Lean Manufacturing training has brought about several improvements in our plant. The one-piece flow in our processing and shipping department has dramatically improved our productivity and organization. The employees have been involved with laying out work cells to help eliminate non value-added activities throughout the entire plant. The greatest benefit has been the personal growth the employees have gained by being exposed to the Lean Manufacturing training. This training has helped position our organization for success and future growth."

Kevin Hadenfeldt , Purchasing Director